2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
FF52 Nupe FF52

brideprice). Since few can afford the high fee, the membership, at least in the higher grade, is perforce restricted. 754x 794

As will have been seen, the organization of the *ndakó gboyá* society shares certain features with that other 'closed society', the order of the *cigbeciži*. I knew of no case, incidentally, in which the same individual belonged to both. But there are certain relevant differences. The *ndakó gboyá* society rests upon a network of lodges and centres of ritual collaboration, not upon a number of scattered individuals; it is much more highly centralized as well as closely knit; and its growth is restricted not only by the high initiation fees but also by the rule, unknown among the medicine-men, that not every member can recruit new ones. It is interesting that no new initiations have taken place in the lifetime of the present generation. My informants could offer no explanation for this. The spread of Islam is certainly not responsible: the various Masters received their rank from Moslem Emirs, and the present incumbents, at least, consider themselves good Mohammedans.[1] Also, the increasing wealth of the country should have made entry into the *ndakó gboyá* easier, not more difficult. I suspect that the Masters of the society, or perhaps their royal protectors, stopped further recruitment precisely in order to prevent the society from growing too large and unwieldy; for as we shall see, its very power, its efficiency under centralized control no less than its financial success, would seem to depend on the smallness of the group which shares in the secret activities.

These activities fall into three groups. The first, of more personal character, concerns only the heads of lodges and follows the familiar pattern of ritual observances entailed in the 'ownership' of 'Great *cigbe*' or of a *kuti* priestship. Thus the head of the lodge will perform all his ancestral sacrifices over the *cigbe* vessel and the other cult objects, which are always kept together in a special hut. He performs a similar sacrifice also as a fixed annual rite (in the 7th or 12th month), now on behalf of the local community, to ensure its well-being and the fertility of the womenfolk. On such occasions one mask will also appear and dance in the village, which performance has no bearing on witchcraft or the punishment of witches. The funerary rites for the Elder of the lodge again include this sacrifice and masked dance.

The second group of activities consists in the performance of the masked dance upon request, that is, when the society is called in by some village in the area, either because it is celebrating the annual *gunnu* or because it feels itself threatened by witches. It is on such occasions that the masks will cleanse the village of witchcraft by 'frightening' the women or bringing an individual witch

[1] The tiny hamlet of Kusogi, for example, includes a small mosque.

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